



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/772,244	01/29/2001	Rajkishore Barik	JP920000376US1	9198

7590 12/20/2005
McGinn & Gibb PLLC
Suite 304 2568 A Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401

EXAMINER

CARLSON, JEFFREY D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3622

DATE MAILED: 12/20/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/772,244

Applicant(s)

BARIK ET AL.

Examiner

Jeffrey D. Carlson

Art Unit

3622

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-66 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-66 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>11/5/02</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:
 - Applicant's Brief Description of the Figures does not specify figures 11a and 11b.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Objections

2. Claims 5, 12, 19, 35, 48, 61, 65, 66 are objected to because of the following informalities:
 - Claims 5, 12, 19, 35, 48, 61, 65, 66 are objected to as not further limiting the parent claim. Claim 1 sets forth particular method steps (determining, checking, displaying), yet claim 5 has language that merely describes qualities of the coupons (location) rather than further specifying steps that are executed as performance of the method.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

- Claims 1, 8, 15, 22, 36, 49, 62 are of unclear claim scope because the phrase "coupons are mutually exclusive" does not state what qualities of the coupons are mutually exclusive.
- Claim 34, there is no antecedent basis for a user's profile

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process ... may obtain a patent therefor ..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957); and *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the conflicting claims so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Applicant is advised that should claims 36 and 48 be found allowable, claims 62 and 66 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof.

When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that

they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-33, 35-46, 48-59, 61-63, 65, 66 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fajkowski (US6932270).

Regarding claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 27, 30, 41, 44, 54, 57, Fajkowski teaches systems and methods for storing electronic coupons, associating them with customers, presenting them at a retail POS and redeeming them. A user is provided with a card which provides a userID [4:6-8]. The card is used to associate selected coupons from a plurality of available coupons from different sources (by scanning paper coupons, by selecting coupons at a kiosk or by downloading coupons from the Internet) with the user's account in a database [3:63-65, 6:1-5, 6:22-25]. When the card is presented at the POS along with products to be purchased, the POS system determines what coupons of the user's collection of selected coupons are redeemable given the user's potential purchases; the system displays these coupons on the display [16:18-31, 17:31-33, 4:25-35]. Fajkowski teaches that the coupon eligibility parameters (product

Art Unit: 3622

name, required size, quantity or combination of items required, expiration) may be stored on the card in order to determine applicable coupons at the POS [10:17-26]. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have stored and analyzed other well known coupon restriction rules such as whether other coupons can be used in combination with a coupon (mutually exclusive coupons). Doing so would enable the system to process and accurately display a wide variety of coupons, including those with exclusivity rules.

Regarding claim 3, 10, 17, Fajkowski teaches that all useable are displayed and that the user may choose which ones to redeem and which ones to save for later [21:22-25]. The act of displaying all eligible coupons is taken to provide a suggestion of an optimal/near-optimal set of coupons to redeem, however the user is free to select only some of the displayed coupons.

Regarding claims 4, 11, 18, Fajkowski teaches that coupons could be displayed which are not fully eligible along with the reasoning for their near-eligible status, such as the product is the wrong size [19:38-43]. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have displayed a similar message when a user has not presented the proper quantity or combination of products [these parameters are disclosed at 10:22-23] when possessing a coupon with such size or quantity restrictions. Both of these examples are taken to provide a teaching of recommending the missing product to the customer for more discounts.

Regarding claims 5, 12, 19, 35, 48, 61, 65, 66, Fajkowski teaches that the coupons may at least be stored at a third party site (Internet) or kiosk (retailer site). The system is taken to reside at the retailer site.

Regarding claim 6, 13, 20, 32, 45, 58, 63, the display of eligible coupons to be redeemed at the POS is taken to provide display of coupons dependant upon optimization parameters; if the customer has the proper products at checkout, he optimizes his savings.

Regarding claims 7, 14, 21, the network is described as the Internet.

Regarding claims 22, 23, 36, 37, 49, 50, 62, Fajkowski's determination of coupons specific to products presented is taken to provide a step of computing a set of coupons dependant upon a user's set of coupons as well as upon the order information. The step of determining if the computed coupon set complies with redeeming conditions is met by inspecting the other various criteria such as expiration, etc.

Regarding claim 24, 38, 51, if in Fajkowski a customer provides a coupon that does not comply with redemption criteria, the customer is free to return another time with a another set of coupons.

Regarding claims 25, 26, 39, 40, 52, 53, Fajkowski teaches that while compliant coupons are shown at the POS, the customer may wish to investigate why some coupons were non-complaint [19:21-25]. The POS may be used to display all coupons that were non-compliant [19:44-53]; it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have displayed non-compliant coupons for any non-compliant criteria including the suggested mutually exclusive criteria above.

Regarding claims 28, 29, 42, 43, 55, 56, Fajkowski teaches that the user may save shopping lists with specified coupons for the products on the list to be used on future shopping trips. Fajkowski also teaches the idea of issuing a rain check for a coupon item the user wishes to purchase, but where the item is currently unavailable. The system will save such a list of rain-checked product(s) for later use. In either case, future use of the saved lists are taken to meet the broad "comparing" by a user.

Regarding claim 31, Fajkowski teaches that a user may be provided with reports of coupon usage and savings [13:5-7, 17:48-63]. User acceptance for redemption of the displayed eligible coupons provides a viewing of reports of coupon usage.

Regarding claim 33, 46, 59, the system is taken to inherently use an AND condition for a coupon having plural redemption conditions (expiration date and product size, for example).

Claims 3, 10, 17 (alternatively) and 34, 47, 60, 64 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fajkowski in view of Beach et al (US2002/0107738).

Beach et al also teaches user collection of e-coupons which are redeemed at the POS [para. 13]. Beach et al teaches that coupons can be recommended to the user based on his user profile [para. 35 (middle of page)]. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have suggested coupons for the user based on his profile so that the user can be conveniently targeted with offers

that are likely to be accepted and purchased. These recommendations are taken to be optimal or near optimal recommendations.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey D. Carlson whose telephone number is 571-272-6716. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8a-5:30p, (off on alternate Fridays).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber can be reached on (571)272-6724. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jeffrey D. Carlson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3622